Labour Act, so as to kickstart the second generation of economic reforms and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether before finalising the matter it was discussed with the concerned ministries and also with the State Governments and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for rushing with the amendments without awaiting recommendations of the Labour Commission which is likely to report early next year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Review/updation of labour laws is an ongoing process in order to bring them in tune with the prevailing situation and emerging needs. Government's intention to amend the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 has already been announced while presenting the Budget for 2001-2002. As these matters are still under discussions, it will be premature to give any further information in this regard.

(b) and (c) So far as consultation with the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India is concerned, amendment proposals in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, have been considered in the various meetings of the Inter-Ministrial Group.

Changes in labour laws such as Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition)Act, 1970 are a continuous process and involve consultations with the tripartite partners. It may, therefore, not be administratively expedient to put a stop to the process of carrying out changes which are overdue, in the existing labour laws until the Report of the Second National Commission on Labour is received.

Employment Strategy during the Ninth Five Year Plan

1316. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the focus of employment strategies during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether these strategies have been able to achieve the desired results; and

(c) whether these have been able to provide better living and working conditions upholding the dignity of labour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The Ninth Plan had accorded priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. The plan had focused on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are labour intensive, in regions characterised by higher rates of unemployment and underemployment.

(b) and (c) There was substantial reduction in the persons below the poverty line. As per estimates of the Planning Commission the number of persons below the poverty line which was of the order of 36% in 1993-94 has come down to 26% in 1999-2000.

Unemployment Problem

1317. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any Action Plan/Policy for solving the problem of unemployment for the educated and uneducated youths in Meghalaya;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) Employment generation in the country is attempted through the growth process of the Economy. Ninth Plan had accorded priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. The plan had focused on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are labour intensive, in regions characterised by higher rates of unemployment and underemployment. The overall plan is for generation of employment in all the States including the State of Meghalaya.

A scheme for setting up of new ITIs and strengthening of the existing ITIs in the North-Eastern States and Sikkim has been taken up for improving